

IPPS Area Meeting at NYBG

The Garden Terrace Room at the New York Botanical Garden served as a beautiful venue for an IPPS Eastern Region Area Meeting held on October 24, 2014. Thirty three registrants (from seven states!) were welcomed by Todd Forrest, NYBG's Arthur Ross Vice President for Horticulture and Living Collections. Todd stated that the mission of the NYBG has always been to connect people and plants. He said he has been a fan of IPPS since his young days in the industry when he was influenced by IPPS 'legend' Al Fordham. Todd said that what he loves about IPPS is that members understand plant biology, value plants and really know what they are doing, calling IPPS the "last bastion of plantsmanship".



Left image L-R: Bianca Sullivan from Colorful Gardens, Deborah Rodgers, Roxanne Dascal and Gerarda Boger from North Fork Boutique Gardens. Right image: the gang from Prides Corner Farms.

Mike Emmons, Nursery Manager at Prides Corner Farms in Lebanon, CT, started the program off with his presentation on protecting plants during extreme cold and dramatic weather events. He stated that nurseries need to be prepared for hurricanes or other high wind events, hail and drought as well as for the low temperatures, fluctuating temperatures and wind chill of winter, for ice or heavy snow storms and for the late winter to early spring transition. Mike went on to detail Prides water conservation levels and also how Prides protects plants requiring different levels of protection over the winter.

Ed Bowen of Opus Plants in Little Compton, RI stated that he "grows plants that don't sell well" to the laughter of the audience. Opus Plants is a "nano-nursery" in Southeastern New England that focuses on the under-cultivated and garden-worthy, and specializes in unusual perennials. He grows his plants from seed because that's "where the fun is!" He showed the results of his breeding efforts (*Hydrangea aspera*, *Salvia glabrescens* and more) but denied considering himself a plant breeder, but more of a "pollen pimp".

Brian Kunkel, Extension Specialist in Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, presented his research on the red-headed flea beetle. He noted that this pest is present from Connecticut to Mississippi to Michigan, where feeding causes brown spotting and holes in affected foliage of numerous nursery crops including *Hibiscus*, *Itea*, *Lagerstroemia*, *Syringa*, *Weigela* and *Spiraea*. He reported that the different stages in the life cycle of the beetle can be related to what plants are flowering at that time. For example, the 1st generation of larvae are active when black locust is in full bloom and the 1st generation of active adults occurs when *Hydrangea macrophylla* is in bloom. He reported that his research on the use of entomopathogenic nematodes (EPN) as a biologic control of the red-headed flea beetle needs more work. Image: Red-headed flea beetle damage on forsythia.



Mina Vescera, Nursery Extension Specialist at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, NY, presented “Why Biodiversity Matters in the Urban Landscape.” She encouraged attendees to broaden their definition and application of biological diversity within urban landscape design while still creating aesthetic and ornamental appeal. She noted it is important to establish that urban and suburban areas can be biologically rich so that urban foresters and city planners can actively manage to preserve and promote that diversity.



John Courtney was the next speaker to the podium. John stated that he grows over 200 species of plants from seed at Aquascapes Unlimited Inc. - a wholesale aquatic nursery located on 20 acres in Bucks County, PA. They produce native wetland and ornamental aquatic species for restoration, conservation, green infrastructure and storm water projects nationwide. His specific topic of the day was the commercial propagation of temperate pitcher plants (*Sarracenia*). John encouraged every horticulturist to try growing *Sarracenia* (a genus of carnivorous plants), which derive their nutrients from the insects that they trap and digest. These plants take 6 years from seed to flower without intervention but ‘just’ 16 months with 200 ppm nitrogen via mist once a week. He showed images of some spectacular hybrids he sells for cut and dried flowers and commented that simple hybrids are best though he has created some “Frankenplants”! Image: *Sarracenia* ‘Judith Hindle’

Lloyd Traven rounded out the program with his lively presentation, *A Total System Approach to Chemical-Free Propagation*. Lloyd and his wife, Candy are owners of Peace Tree Farm in Kintnersville, PA where they are committed to using advanced technology combined with sustainable and organic growing techniques.. Peace Tree Farms is a USDA Certified Organic grower and propagator. Lloyd stated that propagation is all about management of the environment – ALL the environments. He reviewed how Peace Tree Farms monitors pests and times biological control releases. He revealed that one key to success is to start early with pre-plant dips and stressed the need to apply predators *before* plants enter the greenhouses. Lloyd also aerates his irrigation water to at least 10% oxygen to decrease anaerobic activity. He emphasized the need for meticulous sanitation and weed control in the greenhouse and showed slide after slide of the resulting spotless, uniform, thriving crops.



We enjoyed a delicious (“best boxed lunch ever”) lunch, complimented by apples and cider from Dennis Mareb of Windy Hill Farm. After lunch, Marc Hachadourian, Director of the Nolen Greenhouses, led a guided tour to the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory where the *Kiku, the Art of the Japanese Garden* display was in full glory. *Kiku* means chrysanthemum and we were wowed by the meticulously trained specimens on hand– some mimicked bonsai, others featured cascading waterfalls of blossoms. And, of course, the stand-outs were the “1000-bloom” mums in all their glory. These creations were accomplished by experts with years of specialized training. Some of us ended the day at the NYBG gift shop to drool over the fabulous book and gift selections before braving the New York City traffic home.

L to R: Marc Hachadourian, NYBG host, Dennis Mareb and Dustin Bartlett, Windy Hill Farm

Thanks to our sponsors: Griffin Greenhouse Supplies, Windy Hill Farm, North Fork Boutique Gardens and the New York Botanical Garden especially Marc Hachadourian for his invaluable assistance.

